SOMALILAND MDI
SYRIA MDI

Wells

SD 312

Wells may belong to private individuals or they may be the property of the tribe. Ownership is based on the construction of the wells. The custom varies from place to place but, generally speaking the person or tribe who has dug the well has primary rights over it. Should he not be using it, other people may do so.

Natural and Artificial Basins

Natural basins are freely used by all. Artificial basins are owned by a person or tribe. Persons other than the owners may be authorised to use these basins against the payment of a fee.

SYRIA

Water Rights

SY 312 421

Water generally belongs to the owner of the land on which it is located. In areas where water is scarce, however, land and water can be sold and rented separately.

SY 312 437

In Soukhne, along the Euphrates, water sellers may be paid in money or in goods. The owners of small hydraulic enterprises (motor pumps, etc.) on the Euphrates are often paid by the farmers with half of their harvest for the water they furnish even though the cost of irrigation amounts to no more than 8 to 10 percent of the yield.

SY 312 554

According to custom, important personalities have water rights superior to those of the common people. Such rights, sometimes taken by force, are often no more than usage rights which do not imply the real ownership of a spring or a river.

SY 312 421

Ownership of water can be private or collective. Private ownership is rare and applies only to springs or wells of no great importance. It is to be found in densely-populated districts of the Mediterranean slope or in the cultivated steppes. Small gardens irrigated in this way are often individually set up by farmers or wealthy citizens as an investment of their capital. Such gardens are called <u>boustins</u>.

Collective property belongs to the state, to a village or a community. The present legislation provides that all water be owned by the state. Villages, however, also possess hydraulic resources. Occasionally a community is the sole owner of a spring or a water course, while in other cases such ownership is divided among neighboring communities. Old local customs which vary according to regions and communities regulate the distribution of such waters. 312 421

Water Distribution

Among Members of the Same Community

If water is abundant with respect to the surface to be irrigated, each user takes what he needs with little consideration for his neighbor. The only limit set up by custom is that the water level on the irrigated surface may not exceed ankle height.

If the flow of water is insufficient with respect to the size of the land to be irrigated, the regulation becomes more complicated. In the rare case where custom does not apply, everyone protects his crops against drought as well as he can. Generally, however, custom guarantees every plot of land a portion of that quantity of water used by the community and which may vary during the year. This portion consists of water taken from a spring or a canal and supplied during a certain period of time (every week, every fortnight, etc.) according to the duration of the rotation period (addine) which varies, according to the localities, between seven and 32 days.

Time Calculations

The methods of calculating time vary from region to region. Watches, sun dials and hour glasses (kellé) are used. At Kariattein the rotation period (addine) lasts 15 days, and water agreements are concluded in "Roman hours." These correspond to three hours and are divided into 40 misariyes. The misariyé corresponds to four minutes and thirty seconds. 312 805

In Kabeck Ghouta there are two water turns, one during the day and the other at night. The entire rotation period lasts twelve days. Water portions are calculated in "local"

63:Simmons et al G-5 (1941-1951) 1954
M1 Middle East
SYRIA MD1

The infant mortality is not known, but local observers believe that it is at least 250 per 1,000 live births. In many rural villages the mortality among children under 5 years of age probably reaches 40 to 50 per cent. Discrepancies in reporting are exaggerated by the fact that certification of birth is not required for infants dying during the first year of life. The official infant mortality rate for 1948 was 47.6 per 1,000 births for the country, but 75 per 1,000 births in the city of Damascus. Among almost 15,500 deaths registered in 1949, over 21 per cent were of infants under 1 year and about 35 per cent of children under 5 years of age.

Social Economy

Agriculture is the basis of Syria's economy. Over two thirds of the people are dependent upon the land, and, in consideration of the paucity of other natural resources, its full utilization is a problem of primary concern to the welfare of the country. Except in limited portions of the northwestern and the northeastern provinces, the rainfall is deficient and erratic, and the expansion of agriculture is contingent upon the development of irrigation and more efficient methods of production. Estimates of the amount of cultivable land range from 10 to 21 million acres—from less than one quarter to almost one half of the total land area. A similar disparity is noted between the figures quoted for the acreage now under cultivation, but all sources agree that less than one half of the potentially arable lands are planted in crops. Most observers believe that the land suitable for agriculture approximates 12 to 14 million acres, while the area under cultivation is between 5 and 6 million acres. Roughly 10 to 20 per cent of the tilled land is irrigated at present, but it has been shown that the farm acreage could be more than doubled by increased irrigation, associated with controlled settlement, in the Orontes, the Khabour and the Euphrates river valleys.

Foremost among the factors which impede the promotion and the modernization

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of agriculture are the present forms of land tenure. The proportion of large- and small-scale proprietors is not accurately known, but at least one half of the total farm acreage is owned by wealthy, and often absentee, landlords, and worked according to the share-tenancy system. In many northern districts, particularly in Latakia and Al Jazira provinces, the proportion is probably closer to 70 to 80 per cent. Communal ownership by tribes or villages is also common in some areas. The constitution of Syria provides for the creation of a landowning peasantry through the redistribution and the sale of state lands, but as yet the percentage of independent farmers is relatively small. Many tenant families and agricultural laborers live at subsistence levels under conditions of extreme poverty. Within recent years attempts have been made to encourage the settlement of the Bedouin tribes. Some now live in permanent villages, where they combine cultivation of cereals with the raising of sheep, migrating seasonally with their flocks in search of pasturage.

Wheat is the principal crop. Barley, maize and other cereals are also grown, especially in the areas of Homs, Hama, Hauran and Al Jazira. Olives, fruits and vegetables are important products on the oasis around Damascus and in the coastal region. Cotton is cultivated in Latakia, Aleppo and Al Jazira provinces, while tobacco flourishes in some sections of Latakia. Other industrial crops include sugar cane, sugar beets, sesame, castor oil beans and hemp. Sheep and goats are abundant in all parts of the country, but cattle are found chiefly in the coastal highlands, on the Damascus oasis and in the Hauran region in the southwest. Limited programs for the improvement of methods of farming and animal husbandry are undertaken by the veterinary and the agricultural services of the government. Four agricultural schools are operated by the Ministry of Agriculture—near Latakia, Hama, Aleppo and Damascus. In the Damascus region, the Near East Foundation